

Morality

Not to be
Relied on for LIFE.

O R,

A Brief Discourse, discovering the
One Thing Wanting,

which leaves

the legalist Short of Life Eternal.

Delivered in a SERMON on the Lecture
in *Boston*, May, 23^d. 1700.

By Samuel Willard, Teacher of
a Church in *Boston*.

TIT. 3. 5. *Not by works of Righteousness that we
have done, but according to his Mercy he hath
saved us, by the washing of Regeneration, and
renewing of the Holy Ghost.*

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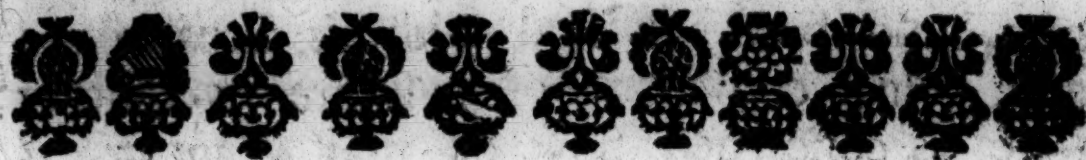
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Morality

Not to be Relied on for Life.

Mark X. 21.

One thing thou lackest.

IN this Context we have an History, which is also recorded in two other, *Evangelists*, viz. *Matthew*, and *Luke*, though variously as to several passages that are inserted in one, and omitted in the other. I may not spend the time in laying open all the particulars in this Narration; every whereof would afford matter of instruction. The Theological Scope of it is to let us see how far a natural man may go in the improvement of his *Moral powers*, and yet miss of eternal life at last; exemplified in a young and noble man of the Jewish Nation, as he is represented by the other *Evangelists*. This man, doubtless

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had not only heard of Christ, but had also heard him, and been affected with his Preaching; and, being convinced of a future everlasting state, is concerned how he may obtain eternal Life in it: accordingly he comes running to Christ, expressing much veneration of him, both in words and gestures, and propounds to him the most important question that he could, *viz. How he may come to inherit eternal life*: though, in the manner of his enquiry, he expresseth a legal spirit, and intimated that he hoped to be Saved by doing, *What shall I do, &c.* Our Saviour treats him courteously, and yet closely; he giveth him good language, but yet searcheth him; and, knowing the deceitfulness of his heart, resolves to discover it to him, and others too. He therefore first puts him upon the duties of the *Moral Law*, where he knew that his great presumption lay, and in which he determined to discover him; directing him to conformity thereto: the self Conceited man doth plumply and with great confidence assert his constancy in these observations; that he hath observed *all these from his youth*, and would fain know whether this were not sufficient, or if any thing more were wanting, *Matth. 19. 20. What lack I yet?* Our Saviour is satisfied, *vers. 21. To look upon him, and love him*; which is not to be understood of a Divine love, at least not of such as he bears to his own, or such whom he hath made partakers

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takers in his grace : but with an humane affection, which is due to ingenuous men, though they be meer moralists : and therefore, as he was not mistaken in him, so he goes on to detect him. That which he summarily mentions in our Text is, that there is a flaw in that which he is so conceited of, that there is something deficient : and, to let him know what this was, and that he was as yet a stranger at home, and did not know himself, he puts him upon a trial, in which the naughtiness of his heart presently discovered it self. Christ did not openly charge him with falsehood, as well he might, and tell him that he had not indeed kept one of these commands aright, but he puts him upon a Test by which he might judge himself, and discover how little safety there was in his condition. Out of doubt, this young man was an eminent instance of a *Legal Moralist*, and one that had with a great deal of *Conscience* and *Integrity* endeavoured an universal conformity to the Law not only in the *Ceremonial*, but also in the *Moral* part of it, and hoped for acceptance and a reward on account of his *Righteousness*. But Christ detects the deceit ; and, though he might have told him that he wanted many things, yet there was one that was the ground of all, and there needed no more to defeat his blooming expectations. In the Greek it is, *there is one thing lacking to thee.* And the word signifies, to fall behind.

6 **Morality** not to be
behind of the thing aimed at; and is a *Metaphor*
from such as *run* in a *race*, but never come to the
Goal, but sit down short of it, and thereupon do
in the issue miss of the *prize* which was set up
at it : and that which our Saviour here intends,
is that there was something wanting, which would
make him to miss of eternal life. The word
used in *Luke* 18. 22. signifies that which is *left*
behind, or is wanting to compleat a thing, with-
out which it remains imperfect, and cannot
answer the end aimed at in it. Hence,

DOCTRINE.

*There is one thing defective in the meer Morality of
fallen men, the want whereof will leave them
short of eternal life.*

Out of doubt there are manifold defects,
which the best duties of sinful men may be
charged withal, and some more than others ;
but, as every of those will not deprive them of
the reward of life ; so there is one thing which,
if there be no more, is enough to make all ap-
pear vain and unprofitable, as to the great de-
sign which man is in pursuit of, *viz. Everlast-
ing felicity* : and this is that which we may at
present make some enquiry into. The Case
here then is ;

QUEST.

Q U E S T I O N.

What is that one thing the lack whereof will spoil the best Morality in men?

Ans. I shall not here spend time in investigating the particular flaw which Christ laid open in this mans Obedience; for it is beyond just dispute, that our Saviours design in this trial, was to convince him of the nature of his malady, and lead him to the root from which it proceeded; which by such a proof he laid open: and what that is, we may now make search after: and, to make way to this, and obviate those prejudices, which proud men will wait for an occasion of, that so they may calumniate our present *Doctrine*, we may pursue it in the following *Conclusions*.

I. *That moral Obedience is due to God from all mankind.* The Jews, when the Gospel was published, were ready to charge Evangelical Preaching as if it made void the Law, which the Apostle utterly denies, and asserts the quite contrary, *Rom. 3. 31. Do we make void the law through faith? God forbid: ye will establish the law.* The moral Law was adapted to the nature of man, as he was placed under the special Government of God. When God speaks of the Ceremonial law, he useth such a word as that, *Ezek.*

20. 25. I gave them statutes that were not good. Not as if they were not good in respect of the use which they were appointed for, for that would have been an impeachment of Gods wisdom: but they were such as in themselves bind an heavy and insupportable burden upon those who were under the obligation of them, *Acts*

15. 10. A yoke which neither we, nor our fathers were able to bear; and they only served for the time being, which was a state of Servitude under which the Church of God was held during its nonage; and even then when these were of force; we are told in, Heb. 9. 9. That they could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the Conscience. Whereas the *Moral*

Law was suited to man, and every way proper to his nature, and relation which in it he bare to God, it hath therefore that encomium given to it, which it can never lose, *Rom. 7. 12. The law is holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.* The obligation therefore to obedience to this law is perpetual, and the Children of God, though brought under the *New Covenant*, do yet owe it; and it lies upon them as a constant duty, to study and endeavour after the greatest perfection in it, according to Christs own precept given in, *Matt. 5. ult. Be ye perfect, as your father which is in heaven, is perfect.*

2. That there is a great deal which a man may do in morality, by the improvement of his natural powers,

powers, with the common assistance of the Spirit of God. We are here warily to distinguish between the *Moral Powers* which belong to the nature of man, and the *Moral Image* which was connatural to him in his state of integrity: this latter indeed is lost by the *Apostasy*, but the former abides, as belonging essentially to Humanity, though this is very much crazed, and hath lost a great deal of its vigour. And, although the power of lust be so strong in natural men, that they cannot of themselves alone withstand the impetuosity of it, yet the *Moral Powers* which remain in the man, may be so far improved by the common influences of the Spirit of God, which he affords to some, on whom he doth not bestow his Sanctifying Grace, as to make a natural man to proceed far in compliance with the Law. This may be instanced more especially in four particulars.

I. A man may maintain an universal outward conformity to the letter of the Law, so far as to be blameless among men. It is true, he can do no one act of Obedience unto Gods Law, that is entirely so, for such an act must stand forth in all its causes entirely, which doth altogether exceed the power of any of Adams Apostate race: But he may be careful in his Conversation, and carry it so circumspectly in all his actions that are exposed to the view of men, as to observe them, and conform to them with great curiousness,
 accor.

according to his understanding of them. And thus this noble young man mentioned in our content was of opinion that he had done, and Paul after his Conversion, when he reflected on his law state, could assert that he had lived after this sort, in, *Phil. 3. 6. Touching the Righteousness which is in the law blameless. i. e. without incurring the imputation of Scandal from men.*

2. He may be very Conscientious in all this. There is a Conscience active in the natural man; and, though it is defiled with sin, as every thing else in the man is, yet it is capable of being improved in him, so as to discover to, and convince him of the reason and equity of these and those duties, the brutishness and unreasonableness of such and such sins, the moral evil which there is in these, and the moral goodness in those, so as to oblige him from an inward principle to do this, and abstain from that. There is a *Moral Integrity* in men, and prevails in some, that leads them to do things, not *Hypocritically*, but *Conscientiously*. We may suppose *Abimelech* to plead to this, for we have no Scripture evidence that he had reached any higher, *Gen. 20. 5. In the integrity of my heart, and innocency of my hands have I done this.* And God herein consents to the truth of this assertion, *Vers. 6. I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thine heart.*

3. He may take a great deal of delight in thus doing. The very *Heathen Moralists*, who only followed

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Followed the light of nature, could boast that they found incomparably more of pleasure and satisfaction, in the exercise of their *Vertues*, than the greatest sensuallists could possibly do in their fleshly pleasures, and could reject these with scorn for those. The *Moralist* doth not put a force upon his whole nature, though he may suppress some exorbitant motions of it, when he abstains from the things that the generality immerse themselves in, and lives contrary to the current of the times and places he lives in ; but he gratifies his *Moral Principles*, when he curbs in these which are *sensual*. Mens *Affections* work naturally, when they are moved by the impressions of Reason in them, for it belongs to the nature of man, that he is a reasonable Creature. God therefore concedes that to men whom he yet reproveth as false, *Isa. 58. 2. They ask of me the ordinances of Justice, they take delight in approaching to God.*

4. He may do it with an aim at obtaining of eternal life in this way. Thus the noble young man instanced in our Context seems to have done, inasmuch as he would know if this would not do. The natural man maintains his cravings after felicity, and hath not lost his apprehensions of an eternal state, and consequently is desirous of settling a permanent happiness, and to this his actions designedly tend, how ever he may be mistaken in the *Medium*. He knows that there must

must be a way to this, and he is in search after it, and makes it his enquiry, *Psal. 4. 6. Many there be that say, who will shew us good?* And the *Legalist* looks upon his own Righteousness to be the way, and accordingly he prosecutes it with such an aim: yea indeed, this is the very legal Spirit in man, that he thinks to obtain it thus: so it was with the *Jews* in the Apostles time, *Rom. 9. 32. They sought Righteousness, not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law.*

3. *Morality helps the man to be Serviceable to mankind in his Generation.* It is a gift of God, for man to be helped to exert these principles which are in them, and for that reason is to be acknowledged and not despised. It is subservient to Gods Common Government, in conducting of the affairs of this lower world; and in this regard a *Moral* man may be said to be a blessing in the place where he lives, and is useful for the publick benefit; and God makes improvement of these for such an end. If all the world were given up to, and drenched in all manner of Immoralities, there would be no living for mankind one with another, but the whole world would soon be reduced to a *Chaos*, whereas this fits the man for publick Service, such an one was *Saul*, by virtue of those common gifts that God bestowed on him, when he was made King over *Israel*; and he continued so to be, till the Spirit of God departed from him.

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Such an one may be helpful to the Children of God; and that both by his counsel, and his example, and so was *Achitophel* to *David*, before he went off in *Absaloms* Rebellion, *Psal.* 55. 13, 14. *Mine equal, my guide, and mine acquaintance; we took sweet counsel together, and walked to the House of God in company.* And doubtless such was *Demas* to *Paul*, before he forsook him.

4. There are many present outward advantages that the man may gain to himself by it. There are several benefits which in this life men get by their morality, in the ordinary course of Gods Providence. The man hereby maintains his credit or reputation among men; it wins the good word of all that are sober; whereas immorality expoeth men to be the scorn of all, is but those that are their companions in debauchery. It keeps the man from those courses which would of their own nature prove ruinous to him, in respect of his estate, peace, health and life. It leaves the man more quiet of Conscience, and prevents those horrors which immoral men lay upon themselves by their sinning against the light that is in them: for the Conscience of a Legalist is wont ordinarily to treat him according as it hath resentments of his carriage towards the Law which is imprinted upon it, *Rom.* 2. 14, 15. *These are a law to themselves, which shew the work of the Law written upon their hearts; their consciences also bearing witness, and their*

their thoughts mean while, either accusing or else excusing one another. And it procures the man many temporal blessings from God in the course of his common Providence; Men fare the better in this world oftentimes for this: for thomeer *Morality* doth not procure Gods special love for men, yet the *Morality* it self is so far a duty, and God many times favours men in temporary benefits on the account hereof; and it prevents calamities which otherwise might have overtaken them: hence that advice given, *Eccles. 7. 17. Be not overmuch wicked, neither be thou foolish, why shouldst thou dy before thy time?*

5. *The Moral Obedience of the Children of God, is Serviceable to their Eternal Felicity.* The truth of this assertion is questioncd by none but such as are downright *Antinomian*; though, how far, and after what manner it is so, affords occasion for hot disputes. There is a moral Righteousness, the want whereof will exclude a man from the Kingdom, *Mat. 5. 20. Except your righteousness exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.* There is a Holiness, without which no man shall see God, *Heb. 12. 14.* This is so far from being discharged by the Gospel Covenant, that it teacheth it, *Tit. 2. 11, 12. The Grace of God which brings Salvation, hath appeared to all men; teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and godly.*

in this present world. There are therefore many and great promises made in the Gospel to the faithful obedience of the Children of God: 1 Cor. 15. ult. Knowing that your labour shall not be in vain, in the Lord. Gal. 6. 9. Be not weary of well doing, for in due time you shall reap if you faint not. Rev. 2. 10. Be thou faithful unto the death, and I will give thee a Crown of Life; Rom. 2. 7. To them that by patient continuance in well doing, seek for glory, honour, and immortality, eternal life. Far be it from any to think, that the Gospel doth either give men a discharge from the duty of Obedience to Gods Commands, or that it doth not encourage it with the promise of eternal rewards.

6. But meer morality will leave the man short of Eternal Life, and under the Curse of Eternal Death. All men in their natural state are under the Curse, Eph. 2. 3. Were children of wrath by nature, even as others. And whiles this abides on them, they must needs be far from life, for these two are contraries. In vain then do men seek any other course to advance their everlasting welfare, but such as may rescue them from that Curse. That man cannot be less than miserable on whom the Wrath of God abides; Christ therefore so expresth sinful mans misery, Joh. 3. 36. The wrath of God abideth on him. The man also must be put into the way of life, never he obtain it, but meer morality will not do

do this, but leave him infinitely short of it, as will presently appear.

7. The reason of this is, because the man, notwithstanding his Morality, wants one thing to render his person and obedience acceptable to God. Out of doubt God hath the disposal of life and death in his own hands: his loving kindness is better than life, and his Wrath carries in it death and ruine to all such as must finally undergo it. Let a man take never so much pains in his Services, and be at never so much cost in the doing of them, yet, if at the last God will not accept of them at his hands, but reject both them and him, they will nothing avail him. Now it is certain, that there is that which is defective in the most operose and specious service of the *Moralist*, which renders it far from pleasing God, so as to crown it with a reward of happiness, & thereby renders it unserviceable to him in order to eternal life, and that we may find out what this one thing is, and not be mistaken about it, we may trace the thing it self, and be satisfied about the reason of its deficiency in this regard, in the following Assertions.

1. In that moral obedience to which life was engaged in the first Covenant, there was required an exact conformity to the Rule therein given to man, which none of fallen men can attain unto. Thereby was not only a morality required of man by the one precept, for so there is still, and will be as long as

as the special Government of God continues: but a constant life of happiness was Entailed upon it by promise, in case man had complied with it: but this was in the *Covenant of Works*, the language whereof we are told, in *Rom. 10. 5.* *Moses describes the Righteousness which is of the law; that the man which doth these things shall live by them.* But then, the Obedience on which this promise might come to be claimed, was such as entirely answered the Law in its full demands, without any the least defect; for we are told, *Jam. 2. 10.* *Who-soever shall keep the whole Law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.* That Covenant did not run in such a strain, let the man do the best he can, and that shall be accepted of him, and he shall live; though it is certain that it required nothing more than man could then do, inasmuch as the Law was adequate to the powers that God put into man, and the Image of God which he then had up-
ed in him, contained in it a power commensurate with his duty: but yet, it commanded entire and perfect conformity to the will of God; and therefore it is a vain thing for sinful men to say, they do to the best of their power, and what more can be expected of them? for, if by sin they have lost that power which God once gave unto man, less then which will not enable him to perform entire obedience

to the precept, should he say true, that he doth to his utmost, it signifieth nothing, as long as that is short of the command. But it is certain that none living hath such an ability remaining in him. The Apostle saith, in 1 *Joh* 1. 8. *If we say that we have no sin we deceive our selves, and the truth is not in us*; and the wise man makes that challenge, *Prov.* 20. 9. *Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?* Yea that is true of the best of men here, *Jam.* 3. 2. *In many things we offend all*; and this leaveth every man that stands related to that Covenant under a Curse, according to, *Gal.* 3. 10. *As many as are of the works of the Law, are under the Curse*; for it is written, *Cursed is every one that continues not in all things that are written in the book of the law to do them.*

2. The Apostasy hath made man a debtor to Revenging Justice, for which his personal Obedience cannot satisfy. The Covenant of Works, under which man was at first placed, had not only in it, a promise of life made to perfect Obedience, but also a threatening of death denounced in case of Disobedience. We are therefore told, in *Rom.* 6. 23. *The wages of sin is death*; it was due to man upon agreement, in case that he should transgress; and this Sanction of that Covenant was of equal force with the former, and God stands in Justice as much obliged to this as to that; accordingly the threatening

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ning was delivered with the greatest asseveration, Gen 2. 17. *In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely dy.* So that now the case is quite altered with the man, in regard of that Covenant, from what it was at the first: for, although the Relation of all men, whiles they remain in their natural estate, which they bear unto that Covenant, abides, and they are to be tried and judged according to the tenour of it, and as they come under this or that Sanction of it: yet the promise of life, as it was made on the Hypothesis of perfect obedience, doth not abide, nor is any longer to be used as an encouragement to fallen man. Once God said, *This do, and live*; but he doth not say so now; for the man is come short of this, being by sin fallen under the threatening, and is utterly lost as to the promise; so that not only is it in vain for him to think to *do and live*, in regard of that impotency which is fallen upon him, leaving him *without strength*; but upon the supposal that he could now henceforward do, as perfectly as Adam could before he lost his power, yet there is no life for him by that Covenant, Gal. 3. 21. *If there had been a law given which could have given life; (i.e. to fallen man) verily righteousness should have been by the Law.* And the reason is, because a Curse is upon him for disobedience; and all his doing can never expiate it; it is but his present quit rent, and will not

make up former arrears; hence that advice, *Luk. 17. 10.* *When ye have done all those things that are commanded you, say, we are unprofitable Servants; we have done that which was our duty to do.*

3. *The acceptableness of the imperfect obedience of sinful men, is derived through a New-Covenant, to which the Moralist is a stranger.* Though the First Covenant accepted of nothing but what was in all points perfect, yet the Covenant of Grace doth. It is certain that there are some whole not only persons but services too are received by God, and he smells a sweet favour in them. This is not because they have recovered a sinless perfection, or that any of their duties are without defects attending them; no; they profess the quite contrary, so did he, *Phil. 3. 12.* *Not as if I had already attained, either were already perfect; and hence is fain to deprecate a law trial, as knowing that he is not able to stand it, but it will condemn him, Psal. 143. 2.* *Enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified.* For this acceptance therefore he must be removed from the Old Covenant, which speaks nothing but terror to him, and be brought under a new one; which is therefore called, *the bringing in of a better hope, Heb. 7. 19.* This Covenant hath declared a way which God hath found out to cover the imperfections, and accept of the sincerity of such as are in

in it, consistent with the Justice of God, and for the manifestation of his Grace. Now the moral man, as such, hath no claim to the spiritual and saving priviledges of this Covenant, nor doth he desire it, counting that he can do well enough without it; however he may, by an external relation, have a claim to Gospel priviledges in the outward dispensation of them; yet he is really under the Law, and therefore must stand or fall according to the sentence of it.

4 In this Covenant there is a new principle requisite, from which all acceptable Obedience must flow, viz. Faith. We are told, in Heb. 11. 6. That without faith it is impossible to please God. And hence, all the truly commendable and acceptable services, are said to be done by Faith. For this therefore it is necessary that not only there be a principle of saving faith in the man, else he can do nothing believably, but there must be the exerting of it in every act of New obedience, if ever God will receive it. A man may pray as formally, and use as suitable and pathetical expressions in it as can be, but if he do not pray in faith, all is lost, and his prayers are but howlings: hence that direction and caution, Jam. 1. 5, 6, 7. Let him ask of God; but let him ask in faith, nothing wavering; for let not such a man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord; and Mat, 21. 22. All things whatsoever ye shall

ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive. A person may hear the word with great attention, and receive it with much affection, *the stony ground hearers, received it with joy, Mat. 13. 20.* But it will not profit him, unless he receive it mixed with faith, *Heb 4. 2.* And the like may be said of all other duties.

5. *This faith hath Christ for its object, on whom it entirely relies for Salvation.* As we are saved by grace, so it is through faith, *Eph. 2. 8.* And without this faith there is no Salvation to be obtained by us, for *he that believeth not shall be damned, Mark 16. 16.* Which faith is not a bare credit of the truths recorded in the Word of God, & those Theological Doctrines that are revealed therein, though this also be necessary unto it; but it centers upon Christ as the object that is therein revealed, and offered in the promise, on whom it placeth its whole dependance for life and salvation; and is therefore called *a believing in him*, and to the so believing, eternal life is secured, *Job. 3. 16. Whosoever believeth in him, shall not perish, but have everlasting life;* which dependance must be limited to him, and not be divided with any other, because our salvation is from him alone, *Acts 4. 12. Neither is there salvation in any other.*

6. *The influence of this faith into our moral Obedience, to render it acceptable unto God, and serviceable to our salvation; is mainly in these three respects.*

1. It makes us sensible of our own self-insufficiency, & drives us to Christ alone, for his strength to enable us. The Moralist doth all his duties in his own strength, nor is he concerned to seek any out of himself: but the true believer doth his in the strength of Christ, he saith as Paul, Phil. 4. 13. *I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me.* By the eye of faith he sees that as he hath no sufficiency of his own for any thing, so that he must have it all from him, 2 Cor. 2. 5. *Not that we are sufficient of our selves, to think any thing as of our selves, but our sufficiency is of God.* He therefore dares not to set about any thing, without looking up to him for his aid: all his undertakings are with such a reference, Psal. 119. 32. *I will run the way of thy Commandments, when thou shalt have enlarged my heart,* Cant. 1. 4. *Draw me, we will run after thee.* If he resolves upon any thing, it is with a reliance here, Psal. 71. 16. *I will go in the strength of the Lord God.* And if he doth any thing well, he pays the acknowledgment of it hither, 1 Cor. 15. 10. *Not I, but the Grace of God which was with me.*

2. It convinceth us of the imperfection of our best duties, so as to remove our dependance on them, and make us to seek a pardon of their short coming, thro' the blood of Christ. Faith makes us apprehensive that we can be accepted only in the beloved, Eph. 1. 6. It makes us to confess with the Church

Mortality not to be

Isa. 64. 6. All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and profess with Paul, Phil. 3. 8. I count all things but loss, and dung that I may win Christ. It lets us see, that if we rely upon them for their own worth, we are undone: that there is enough to be alledged against them, and that therefore there is a pardon to be sought in order to acceptance, according to, Psal. 130. 3, 4. If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, who should stand? but there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayst be feared. We therefore carry them to Christ, that they may be offered up with his sweet Incense, that so the dung of them may not procure them to be rejected.

3. It makes us to resolve our whole hope into the Righteousness of Christ, and a dependance on the free Grace of God. It makes us to do nothing at all with any opinion of meriting by it; we will do nothing, so as to expect that for the sake of our doing, we shall obtain any thing from God. Our Obedience is not put in the room of a Propitiatory Sacrifice, but only is presented as a Thank Offering to God, in testimony of the infinite obligation laid upon us by his giving of his Son for us; we renounce all our own Righteousness in the bottom, that so we may be built upon that of Christ; as he, Phil. 3. 9. Be found in him, not having mine own righteousness which is of the Law, but that which is thro' the faith of Christ. We acknowledge that these
Services

Services are so far from deserving a reward, that it is only free grace that receives them of us; and that it is for Christ's sake that we are so received.

7. *The legal Moralist is not only a stranger to, but an enemy of this faith.* He acknowledgeth no other faith, but one that is *Historical*, and is contained in an *Assent* given to the *Articles of Religion*; as to the faith of *recumbency* on Christ, he looks upon it as a ridiculous thing, and entertains the Doctrine of it with scorn. He hath a Righteousness of his own, which he sets up in contradiction to the Righteousness of faith, that is revealed in the Gospel; and because these two are inconsistent, and the one of them will necessarily drive out the other; the pride of his heart maintains his own, and that will not suffer him to submit to the other. This was the folly and misery of those Jews, *Rom. 10. 3.* *They being ignorant of Gods Righteousness, and going about to establish their own Righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the Righteousness of God.* And hence there is nothing more disgustful to such an one than the plain asserting of the Doctrine of such a faith, as carries the man entirely out of himself, and makes him to place his whole hope on the Righteousness of Christ for pardon and acceptance; and to rely altogether upon him for all the strength and assistance, whereby he may live and please God.

8. Hence

8. Hence it is for the want of this faith that his Morality must needs fail him, and leave him under condemnation in the great day. The absence of this spoils all the rest. Here then we have found out what is the one thing that is lacking, & in the lack of that, every thing else is deficient, and all his labour is lost. And the reason of all this is, because Christ is the Mediator of the New Covenant, who hath alone made the atonement, and opened the way to life by his obedience, so that Justice and Mercy may meet together in the Salvation of Sinners; which, according to the tenour of the New Covenant, can derive to none but by Faith in him, whose perfect righteousness hath made way for the acceptance of the imperfect but sincere Services of true believers.

U S E I.

Hence what caution had Gospel Ministers need to use in their preaching up of moral duties? That it is their duty to preach them, and press them upon their hearers, is certain; otherwise they cannot be faithful in declaring the whole Counsel of God: and yet if they so preach them as to revive the Covenant of Works, to advance the Righteousness of man, and depreciate the Righteousness of Christ, they are far from being the Ministers of Christ, and are indeed the very betrayers of Souls to destruction, as far as in them lieth. Nor indeed do I know of any

any thing which doth more threaten the undermining of true Christianity, and the bringing in of another Gospel, than the putting of *Moral Vertues* into a legal dress, and without any more ado, to commend them to us as the *Graces* of our Christian Religion. He who when he hath told men all the moral duties required in the Law of God, and laid them out according to the nature of them, as they were enjoined on them in the First Covenant, saith to them, *this do and live*, and doth not endeavour to shew them that there is something more wanting, without which they are undone, will be found an enemy of Grace, and a murderer of Souls: nor would I have such a Ministers account to give in the last day for a thousand worlds.

U S E II.

Let it be a Solemn word of Caution to all Sober and Moral men, to beware that you trust not in this for Eternal Life. The pride that is in your corrupt nature, will prompt you exceedingly hereunto, for the natural man would fain be seen and have something to boast of, that he may ascribe to himself; and the flesh pleasing Doctrines that are at this day vended on this account, will be very grateful to that pride, and nourish it in them. But take heed, there is one thing which, if when you have done

done all, is wanting, you will be undone, and found to have *laid out your Money for that which is not bread*: What availed it this man in our *Text*, that he had kept all the *Com-
mands* from his youth upwards? he still wanted that, the want whereof was his undoing. You live among men very Soberly & Abstemiously, you are no Drunkards, Gluttons, Gamesters Fornicators, &c. You do no man any wrong in your commerce, you are diligent in your Callings, honest and conscientious in your traffick, zealous in the Religious observance of the duties of worship private and publick, and have the good word, and applause of your neighbours for these things: and if this be all that you can pretend unto, *you have your reward*; If you have not a better claim to Eternal Life than all this amounts to, you will not be able to stand in the Judgment; the righteous Judge will declare that he knows you not: your morality will be found no better than *iniquity*, and you must depart with the *Workers* of it. See then that now you get that one thing, else all will be lost, and your Souls perish for ever.

F I N I S.
